

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5305

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, EC  
SUBJECT: CONTINUED CFP/DP CONCERN OVER FUTURE OF RETORNO

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IRREGULARITIES IN ESMERALDAS PROVINCE VOTE COUNT, CONTINUED SLOWNESS OF COUNT AND A JULY 28 STATEMENT BY SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT KAROLYS HAVE CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES/POPULAR DEMOCRACY (DFP/DP) COALITION CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY ELECTIONS WILL BE ANNULLED, LEADING TO AN ALTERNATIVE RETORNO PROCESS WHICH WOULD SEE RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT. JAIME ROLDOS ISSUED A STRONG STATEMENT ON JULY 31 WARNING AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE THE ELECTION RESULTS, AND MAURICIO DAVALOS, KEY CFP/DP LEADER, HAS SOUGHT EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN PLACING FULL INFLUENCE OF USG BEHIND PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REACTION TO A NUMBER OF RECENT EVENTS, CFP/DP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JAIME ROLDOS ISSUED A STRONG STATEMENT ON JULY 30 DECRYING INTERFERENCE WITH THE  
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RETORNO PROCESS. HIS STATEMENT WAS PROBABLY PROMPTED BY THE CONTINUING SLOW VOTE SCRUTINY; THE POSSIBILITY, FIRST SURFACED JULY 28, THAT AS MANY AS HALF OF THE VOTES IN ESMERALDAS PROVINCE WILL HAVE TO BE VOIDED BECAUSE OF IRREGULARITIES IN THE WAY THE VOTES AND DOCUMENTS WERE FORWARDED TO THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (SET) IN QUITO; AND A STATEMENT BY SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT GONZALO

KAROLYS ON JULY 28 THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO SERVE AS INTERIM PRESIDENT. THE ESMERALDAS PROBLEM HAS RAISED THE SPECTRE OF MASSIVE IRREGULARITIES AND THE SET BEGAN TO HOLD MEETINGS JULY 31 TO DISCUSS WAYS IN WHICH TO HANDLE IT IN THE MIDST OF ACCUSATIONS BY EACH OF THE VARIOUS CONTENDERS THAT THE IRREGULARITIES ARE DIRECTED AGAINST HIM. KAROLYS' STATEMENT WAS IN RESPONSE TO ONE OF SEVERAL QUESTIONS DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE AND WAS GIVEN HEADLINE TREATMENT IN MOST JULY 29 PAPERS.

3. THE ROLDOS STATEMENT ACCUSED THE "EXTREME RIGHT, BASICALLY ANTI-NATIONAL, OLIGARCHIC AND ANTI-POPULAR" WITH FOMENTING A COUP AND PUTTING THE SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT UP AS PRESIDENT OF A NEW DICTATORSHIP. IT ACCUSED THOSE GROUPS OF PROMOTING AN ARTIFICIAL ECONOMIC CRISIS BY SPECULATING WITH THE DOLLAR-SUCRE EXCHANGE AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD THE COUP. THE STATEMENT ALSO NOTED THAT MANEUVERS TO PERMIT A CHANGE OF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR THE SECOND ROUND IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF EFFORTS OF THE "OLIGARCHY" TO IMPOSE ITS CANDIDATE. TURNING TO PROBLEMS MORE DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THEIR TICKET, ROLDOS AND HURTADO ACCUSED THE GOE OF PERMITTING A CAMPAIGN OF "FALSEHOOD AND CALUMNY" TO BE WAGED AGAINST THEM WHILE THEY ARE PROHIBITED FROM ENGAGING IN ANY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES. IN SUM, THEY NOTED, THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO AN EFFORT TO THROW OUT THE RESULTS OF THE JULY 16

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ELECTIONS, THUS PERPETUATING THE "GOLPISTA" TRADITION IN ECUADOR. THE STATEMENT ENDED WITH A STRONG APPEAL FOR POPULAR SUPPORT TO COMBAT THESE MACHINATIONS.

4. PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC STATEMENT, ON JULY 29, THEIR CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR AND CONFIDANT, MAURICIO DAVALOS, PAID AN URGENT CALL ON THE DCM TO TRANSMIT CFP/DP CONCERNS OVER THE THREAT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. DAVALOS SAID THE CFP/DP HAS BEEN TOLD BY RELIABLE SOURCES THAT THERE IS A PLOT TO RIG VOTING RESULTS SO THAT IT APPEARS MASSIVE IRREGULARITIES OCCURRED. INTERESTED PARTIES WOULD THEN CALL FOR ANNULMENT OF THE ELECTIONS, SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT KAROLYS WOULD BE NAMED INTERIM PRESIDENT, AND A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WOULD BE CONVENED. THE TRANSITIONAL PARTIES, DAVALOS CLAIMED, WOULD MANIPULATE THE CONVENTION PROCESS IN ORDER TO HAVE RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA EMERGE AS PRESIDENT. DAVALOS SAID THAT THE MAJOR FORCES BEHIND THIS PLOT ARE HUERTA, CONSERVATIVE PARTY HEAD RAFAEL ARMIJOS, AND SET VICE PRESIDENT RAFAEL ARIZAGA VEGA.

5. DAVALOS REQUESTED THE AMBASSADOR'S ASSISTANCE IN USING USG INFLUENCE TO SHORE UP THE WILL OF THE MILITARY

IN GENERAL, AND ADMIRAL POVEDA IN PARTICULAR, TO CARRY THROUGH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS ALREADY UNDERWAY. THE DCM TOLD DAVALOS THAT AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ WOULD TOUCH ON THE RETORNO PROCESS DURING HIS JULY 31 CREDENTIALS CEREMONY AND WOULD EXPRESS TO ADMIRAL POVEDA THE USG HOPE THAT RETORNO BE CARRIED THROUGH IN AN HONEST, EFFICIENT MANNER. DAVALOS APPEARED MUCH RELIEVED BY THAT ASSURANCE.

6. COMMENT. EMBASSY HAS NOT PICKED UP OTHER REPORTS OF A PLOT TO ANNUL THE ENTIRE ELECTORAL PROCESS, ALTHOUGH MINGOV JARRIN WAS ONCE BELIEVED TO HAVE SOME SUCH PLAN IN MIND. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ADDUCE OTHER RATIONALES FOR IRREGULARITIES IN ESMERALDAS, ASSUMING THAT THOSE IRREGULARITIES WERE INTENTIONAL RATHER THAN  
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ACCIDENTAL, WHICH IS A FAIRLY LARGE ASSUMPTION AT THIS POINT. RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA WAS THE PROBABLY WINNER IN ESMERALDAS AND WOULD BE MOST AFFECTED BY MASSIVE FRAUD THERE. IN FACT, THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS BEEN AMONG THE MOST VOCAL IN CLAIMING THAT THE IRREGULARITIES WERE DIRECTED AT THEM.

7. ROLDOS' OPPONENTS COULD WELL BE DISCUSSING THIS, ALONG WITH PRACTICALLY EVERY OTHER CONCEIVABLE WAY OF DERAILING HIS CANDIDACY. AND THOSE INDIVIDUALS NAMED BY DAVALOS WOULD VERY LIKELY BE IN THE MIDST OF SUCH PLOTTING. THE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF A MASSIVE PUBLIC REACTION AND THE CERTAINTY OF A STRONGLY NEGATIVE REACTION BY THE US TO MANIPULATION OF THE PROCESS SHOULD HELP CONVINCE THE MILITARY TO ALLOW THE RETORNO TO CONTINUE.  
GONZALEZ

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